



Half Crazy

Feb 2025
Issue No. 14

The Newsletter of the Seated Half Society

1853-O No Arrows and Rays



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1853-O No Arrows and Rays PCGS-6 CAC



Liberty Seated Collectors Club

Uniting collectors of Liberty Seated coinage since 1973



Half Crazy

The Newsletter of the
Seated Half Society

Feb 2025, Issue #14

Current Membership - 38



1839 No Drapery NGC-65

Seated Half Society has 38 Members

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SHS President's Letter

Dennis Fortier, SHS President

With this the fourteenth issue of Half Crazy we begin our fifth calendar year of the Seated Half Society. Wow, five years already. Dedicated Seated half dollar enthusiasts continue to express an interest in joining our society. This is everything I had hoped it should be in the formative months.

Here is your chance to order our great looking SHS club shirts with the logo designed by Jim Macor. This opportunity will not come again for several years so order now.

This year we will look into the lesser Seated Half collectors; the Type collector. For good or ill the nineteenth century type collector is a force to be reckoned with. In this issue we look at the 1839 No Drapery half dollar, a half year issue that is much sought after by type collectors.

Several great articles appeared in last years Gobrecht journal issues. Proof Half Dollar research by Craig Sholley and John Dannreuther as well as a plethora of new die varieties for the 1876-CC by Dick Osburn, here I offer some commentary on those efforts.

We bring you up to date on some rare issues that sold recently and discuss where Liberty Seated Half Dollar research is headed. Take a look at this quarters variety challenge and let me know if you got it.

Last, but certainly not least, SHS Vice-President offers us a look into the Seated halves in the Farmer Brown Hoard. Talk about an interesting old collection.

Regards
Dennis Fortier
SHS President

* * * * *

Again, if you believe you qualify for membership, please contact Verne Pitman or myself to schedule an audit of your collection. All LSCC members who qualify are welcome. We hope you will join our association and become a member of the Seated Half Society.

Dennis Fortier, SHS President
ricajun@msn.com

Verne Pitman SHS Vice-President
vwpitman@gmail.com

Also, see the club By-laws and Audit information, on the club webpage
<http://lscweb.org/SHS-homepage.shtml>



SHS Shirts



At the recent FUN show an SHS member asked about ordering an SHS shirt. It has been awhile since we ordered shirts. Several members have qualified for membership in the mean time, and have not had the opportunity to order a shirt.

So I have contacted our supplier and have arranged for another order to be placed. I erg you to send a check to me personally (the SHS does not have a bank account) as soon as you can. Another opportunity to get one of these sharp looking shirts will not be had for several years. **Checks must be received by May 1.**

Send your check, size, and address for **\$40 (S to XL)**, **\$42 (2XL and up)** to:

Dennis Fortier
215 Pomeroy Dr
Crossville TN 38558

Make check out to **Dennis Fortier**



Featured Variety -1839 No Drapery



1839 ND NGC-65

The Liberty Seated half dollar series began with the 1839 No Drapery half dollar. Folklore says the public was offended by the so-called naked arm of a woman, but that is not the case. Truth be told, it was quickly noticed there was a need for altering the obverse die for better striking.

The addition of the so-called drapery below Liberty's arm and reduction of the rock that she sits on helped to produce better overall striking qualities. The larger rock is the easiest way to tell a true 1839 No Drapery from a fake. Just compare it to any other Liberty Seated half dollar.



(Cont next page)



1839 No Drapery (Cont)



Close-up of the No Drapery rock and the rock used after the addition of the drapery, notice the distance from the star.

Pop reports show the 1839ND issue to be a common date with a population total at PCGS of 415 and NGC 211. The 1839 With Drapery issue has numbers that are very comparable. The highest graded No Drapery at PCGS is MS-65, while NGC boasts an MS-66.

As a half year type coin, nineteenth century type collectors must include it in their type sets. This otherwise common issue has taken on a pricing structure that far exceeds its rarity. As a collector of seated halves these past twenty years, I can state that the 1839 No Drapery has maintained its position as an overpriced addition to any collection. We must grin and bear it.



Can You Identify This Die Variety (challenge)



One member answered the question from the last issue of Half Crazy correctly, this is the 1840-O WB-10. This variety is most often seen in this next to final die state. Try finding one without the die crack. Here's this issues stumper!





Interesting on-line Find

Question 1. Is the Coin the result of a coin Doctor ?

The toning is heavy with a curious square shape on the obverse

Question 2. Are the Chopmarks contemporary or Modern?

Is there a lack of toning in the chopmarks?



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Sold for \$1,000!



Information Wanted!

By Bill Bugert

I am currently compiling information on examples of the 1849 WB-6 Dramatically Doubled Date and 1873 No Arrows Open 3 (both varieties) half dollars and am **seeking your assistance**. If you own either of these varieties and wish information on them included in my to-be-published Registers (similar to my 1878-S Register), please contact me at wb8cpy@earthlink.net. I am specifically looking for pedigree information, prices paid, and photographs. Please help!

To date and considering possible duplicate entries, I can account for approximately 38 different 1849 DDDs and 66 different 1873 NAOP3 half dollars. I believe there are others.

Date photos of these two major varieties are depicted below and detailed information is included in my books.





1853-O No Arrows and Rays



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From Heritage write-up:

The 1853-O No Arrows half dollar is a legendary rarity among regular issue U.S. coins -- from a small-but-unknown mintage that was released into circulation just prior to the silver weight reduction for half dollars and other minor silver coinage in 1853.

Only a small number of regular Mint issues survive in such small quantities, yet are still considered to be "regular issues." They are often considered the rarest of the rare. The 1822 and the 1854-S half eagles come to mind, and also the 1802 half dimes. Certainly, the 1853-O No Arrows half dollars fall into this esteemed category. It is said that with three or less pieces known, a U.S. coin issue is "uncollectible." The 1853-O No Arrows half reports only four known survivors. Each of the surviving coins causes a groundswell of interest when it makes a rare appearance at auction. Often, opportunities to obtain a certified 1853-O No Arrows are separated by decades, not years.

This coin was once owned by club member Roy Ash!

Sold in January 2025 for **\$288,000 WOW!**



1878-S Sold in GFRC Auction



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SHS Vice-President Verne Pitman wins the Newtown Collection's 1878-S (BB-22) PCGS-40 for the opening bid of \$75,000. Congratulation Verne! Welcome to the 78-S club.

Heritage 1849 Dramatically Doubled Date - Sold



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Finest known
1849 DDD
NGC-64
sold on Heritage
for **\$6,300**
Wow Cheap



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com



Commentary

Always More to Know

Now that Bill Bugert has written most of his Registers you might be thinking that everything about Liberty Seated Half Dollars is known. Bill would be the first to tell you that is far from the truth. Even with a handful of experts assisting in his research there is much more to know and learn on the subject.

Yes, Bill and others have done an amazing job of research over the last fifty years; and the Gobrecht journal has been instrumental in collating all these individual efforts. The Liberty Seated Half Dollar series is huge and as a whole it is a vast undertaking. This country is enormous and collector coins not only sell nationally on the internet and in auctions, but also locally from dealer to collector and back again. This local level of coin buying and selling is where many hidden surprises can turn up.

Just last year three low grade 1878-S' turned up that had never been seen on a national level. This is, in part, because the internet has changed the way collectors collect and dealers acquire merchandise. Still many lesser coins never or seldom go beyond their local trading area and the chances of knowledgeable numismatists finding these unknown die varieties, die states, knowledge changing pieces, or major finds is greatly reduced.

The experts, and knowledgeable dealers, can't be everywhere; and as many are aging out it is up to the next generation of numismatists to pick up the torch. Sadly most coin collectors are just that, coin collectors with little interest in raising their level of knowledge.

Therefore, it is up to us, the few, the insane, the Liberty Seated Half Dollar nuts, to continue to search the far horizons for new Liberty Seated Half Dollar knowledge. One way is to concentrate on one date or issue. In the most recent issue of the Gobrecht Journal Dick Osburn told us more than we ever wanted to know about the 1876-CC half and brought to light many new die varieties. Pick a date (a common date that needs more attention), scour the internet, go to large and local shows. Include coins shops and coins shows in your vacation travels. The future of LSHD research is at the macro level. So, get off the sidelines and into the game!

The Editor



Feature Article

The Farmer Brown Hoard: Liberty Seated Half Dollar Finds

Verne Pitman LSCC #2467 SHS #2

One of the cool things about being known as the “coin guy” in my immediate and extended family is the occasional call or text message that begins as, “Hey Verne, you know about coins, right?” The treasure hunt typically begins after receiving the message. Such was the case some months ago when my wife’s Aunt A (we’ll just use initials henceforth for the sake of anonymity) asked the “Hey Verne...” coin question as her son, Cousin K, inherited a large collection of coins (hoard actually) originally assembled by his Great Grandfather who we’ll call Farmer Brown from Rhode Island.

The Story of Farmer Brown

Farmer Brown is remembered as an old-time farmer of limited means who in his later years lived with his wife in an extremely modest fashion. The old farmer had passed away in the early 1980’s. There are stories of a farmhouse in great disrepair with various little rodent creatures running around and drafty winds blowing through patched up windows. Little else is remembered about Farmer Brown and his wife as decades have passed and those who knew them well are long gone. After his passing, one of the items in the farmer’s “estate” was his big box of coins which was bequeathed to his daughter and subsequently passed to his grandson and granddaughter, Uncle G and Aunt S. As required for settlement of the estate, the box of coins was appraised by a local dealer in January 1986 and assigned a value of \$9652. Uncle G took possession of the box of coins as Aunt S had no interest in the collection. It turns out that Uncle G similarly had little interest in the collection as after transferring the coins to 2 big plastic bins, the hoard sat in the basement unloved for nearly the next 4 decades. It was then sometime in 2022 when Uncle G transferred custody of the boxes of coins to his son Cousin K.

Contents of the Hoard and Meetings with Cousin K

Before consulting with me, Cousin K showed a few coins to a local RI dealer who was reportedly impressed by what he saw. The local dealer basically told Cousin K that the collection was too much for him to handle and that he should seek some serious help in organizing and handling the collection. After that local consultation, Cousin K started to study a bit about coins and soon began to realize that he was in possession of a potentially very valuable collection. After being referred to me by Aunt A, Cousin K gave me a call to chat about what he found thus far sorting through the collection. During our initial call, Cousin K mentioned that he had a 1916 quarter and an 1893 Morgan dollar. Being a bit skeptical I asked him to text me a couple pictures. He quickly obliged and sent me pictures of a VF or so 1916 Standing Liberty Quarter and an 1893 S Morgan. Then followed pictures of a 1794 flowing hair half dollar and an 1806 draped bust quarter! After catching my breath and asking what else he had, we decided that we had better meet up and in order for me to get a good look at everything.



The Farmer Brown Hoard: Liberty Seated Half Dollar Finds (cont)

Our first meeting lasted about 6 hours or so, where I was presented with literally hundreds if not thousands of coins, the most modern of which was a Franklin half from the late 1940's. Nearly every series of US silver and copper coins was represented including some very abused colonial coins and silver dated as far back as 1794. I poured through small cardboard boxes filled with well circulated seated dimes and half dimes, Barber dimes, 2-cent pieces, Bust coins of all denominations, and of particular interest to this article, a good number of Liberty Seated Half Dollars. Also present was a large bag of Spanish or Spanish Colonial 8 Reales pieces and other foreign coins which were saved for another day. That bag is still on our "get around to it" list as presently we continue to focus on the US coins.

We worked to begin sorting what we found by placing selected better coins into flips and organizing further into series by date and mint mark while also paying close attention to potential value. Some of the better coins were assembled into a "good stuff" binder, including some interesting Seated Halves that I'll present below.

Interestingly, Farmer Brown had placed certain series into circa 1940 blue Whitman folders which were somewhat flimsy and moldy after decades in the basement but at least the sorting didn't have to begin from scratch. Just as a teaser, imagine the look in my eyes when I saw the 2 folders comprising a 100 % complete set of Barber Quarters, AG and better, and a nearly complete set of Standing Liberty quarters (no 18/17 overdate) in fine or better condition. It was obvious to Cousin K and I that all these coins were likely circulation finds dating back to the early/mid 1900's rather than purchases, especially given Farmer Brown's meager means. We also speculated that some of the earlier coins e.g., the bust and seated coins, may have been passed down to Farmer Brown by ancestors further back in family history as it was unlikely that these coins were still floating around in circulation in the early 1900's.

During this first meeting we also discussed the benefits of certification of the better coins that were identified and placed in the "good stuff" binder. This article will present findings from the Liberty Seated Half series.

Identification and Selection of the Coins for Certification

Cousin K and I met again in the Fall of 2024 with the intention of selecting which coins were worthy of certification and grading. As I'm a member of NGC we decided to submit to that service. It quickly became apparent that we would need to accomplish this endeavor in chunks as there were a great many coins that would benefit from certification. We assembled 2 initial groups for submission: one being a group of 4 high value coins for the express tier and another group of 14 for the standard tier. All were brought to the Baltimore Whitman Show in November and handed off to NGC. Among the express tier were the [1794 half dollar, 1916 SLQ, the 1893 S Morgan, and a 1901S Barber quarter but I'll save further details of those 4 coins for another day in other journal articles.](#)



The Farmer Brown Hoard: Liberty Seated Half Dollar Finds (cont)

Among the coins submitted to the standard tier were several coins of interest to this article. The standard tier submission included the following Seated Halves: 1846 Tall Date, 1846 O Medium Date, 1856 P, O and S, 1887, 1888, and 1889. A good deal more Seated Halves were present but were either deemed more appropriate for an economy tier submission (being prepared as I write this article) or not suitable for certification e.g. Dansco coins. Although several coins intended for the standard submission displayed evidence of an ancient cleaning, in my estimate the seated halves in this submission ranged in grade from varying levels of VF to AU. Interestingly, the halves from the 1880's were well circulated rather than the more typically encountered AU and Uncs.

Certification Results

First to come back to us were the 4 coins submitted via the Express Tier. As mentioned, these results will be summarized elsewhere.

Several weeks later, the results of the Standard Tier submission were in. Pictured are a few crude pictures of Liberty Seated halves pre-certification and the results post slabbing. The results of the submission were within expectations. Some additional pictures of the coins intended for the economy submission or the Dansco follow.

1846 Tall Date and 1846 O Medium Date





The Farmer Brown Hoard: Liberty Seated Half Dollar Finds (cont)

1856 P, 1856 O and 1856 S





The Farmer Brown Hoard: Liberty Seated Half Dollar Finds (cont)

1887, 1888

and 1889



Coins Planned for the Economy Tier and the Dansco Candidates

Cousin K and I met up again in January to further evaluate a good number of Seated and Bust coins and determine next steps. Two Seated halves, 1854 O and 1855 O were identified for submission at the economy level. These 2 are pictured below.



The Farmer Brown Hoard: Liberty Seated Half Dollar Finds (cont)



We also assembled a group of 36 addition Seated Halves that didn't quite make the cut for certification at this time. Although not slabable they'd look nice in a Dansco Album. Group shots of these coins are below.





The Farmer Brown Hoard: Liberty Seated Half Dollar Finds (cont)



It's now almost 2 years since our first meeting and we're still sorting through the hoard! We continue to organize the collection and come up with plans to certify the coins that would benefit. I think we've found all the interesting Seated Halves but who knows, as there's still a bit more digging to do. Cousin K continues to study and acquire more coin knowledge and can now be considered a new and enthusiastic coin collector. In addition to this Seated Half Dollar summary, I'm also preparing a few more articles specific to other coins found in Farmer Brown's treasure chest. Keep an eye out for related articles in the e-Gobrecht for a fuller summary of the Seated Coinage finds, the Journal of the Barber Coin Collector's Society and NENA News as there's lots to share from this magnificent treasure.



All photos unless otherwise stated are from Heritage coin auctions

(100 points needed for membership in the Seated Half Society, see our webpage for details)

<http://lscweb.org/SHS-homepage.shtml>

Request for Content

Any publication is only as good as the content it receives from its members. Articles, stories and photos are always welcome and encouraged! Please submit to the SHS Editor, Dennis Fortier at: ricajun@msn.com

Again, if you believe you qualify for membership, please contact Verne Pitman or myself to schedule an audit of your collection. All who qualify are welcome! We hope you will join our association and become a founding member of the Seated Half Society.

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